



A Human Rights Agenda for Russia

February 2012

Ahead of the Russian Presidential election on 4 March, Amnesty International is calling on the successful candidate to place the respect for human rights at the heart of their political agenda for the next six years.

Over the last few weeks, all of the presidential candidates have, to varying degrees, touched on the core issues preventing Russian society from fulfilling its rich potential, including the lack of political pluralism, the need for greater media freedom, endemic corruption, the impunity of government officials, entrenched inequalities and an ineffective judiciary.

All of these issues constitute, or contribute to, human rights violations – and demand human rights-based solutions. Russia has both the human and the material resources to provide them. Solving these deep-rooted problems requires only the strong political will of Russia's leadership – the responsibility for which must ultimately lie with its next President.

As the first generation of post-soviet voters heads to the polls, the hopes and expectations of all Russians remain what they always were – the full enjoyment, for so long denied, of their most basic rights as individuals and as citizens.

Amnesty International is therefore urging the next President of the Russian Federation to:

1. Ensure that no Russian citizens are arbitrarily denied their rights to political participation, including by joining or establishing a political party; via the necessary legislative and policy changes, remove obstacles and challenges which prevent the growth of a vibrant civil society;

2. Respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including for those who represent a minority or stand on a dissenting position;

3. Respect and protect freedom of expression for all, among them those with independent or dissenting views, including journalists, trade union activists, civil society activists and human rights defenders; ensure that the threats and attacks against them are effectively investigated;
4. Remove legal and practical barriers which obstruct genuine media pluralism, refrain from censorship and the use of unlawful or arbitrary restrictions on the freedom of exchange of opinions and information on the internet;
5. Strengthen independence of the judiciary and eliminate corruption within the judiciary, prosecutorial and investigative agencies;
6. Eliminate torture and ill-treatment by, and corruption within, law enforcement agencies;
7. Improve conditions in detention and guarantee access to adequate medical care and legal representation for all persons in custody;
8. Ensure that the fight against terrorism and extremism is conducted in accordance with the rule of law and strictly in line with Russia international human rights obligations;
9. Introduce comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination on such grounds as race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, political affiliation or sexual orientation, and take measures to ensure that it is fully and effectively implemented;
10. Ensure effective, equal and adequate access to health care, housing and education for everyone.
11. Implement European Court of Human Rights judgments, including by taking general measures to address systemic violations, fully cooperate with all UN, Council of Europe and other international and regional human rights bodies and mechanisms;
12. Ensure that Russia's international influence is used to promote the respect for human rights abroad.